Mr. Chairman,

I would first like to extend to you the Canadian delegation’s appreciation for holding this session. I would like to focus my remarks on strengthening the NPT’s review process, and matters related to Article X and withdrawal from the Treaty.

Canada believes in advancing the principle of “permanence with accountability” that underpinned the decision on strengthening the review process when the Treaty was indefinitely extended in 1995. We believe that most States Parties also strongly support taking action to strengthen the NPT’s review process. However, we also recognize the reluctance among some to devoting limited time and resources on these issues, given other more pressing challenges and priorities. It is important that we continue to exchange views about how best to strengthen governance and accountability in the NPT in order to move this agenda forward in the current review cycle.

One way that all States Parties can contribute to strengthening the NPT’s review process is through regular reporting. Let me reiterate our call for all States Parties, both Nuclear- and Non-Nuclear Weapon States, to fulfil their commitments to better reporting in Step 12 of the 13 Practical Steps in 2000 and actions 20 and 21 in the 2010 Action Plan.

Pursuant to these commitments, all States Parties should voluntarily provide information on their efforts to implement all articles of the Treaty, as well as key political agreements from previous RevCons, given the intertwined nature of the Treaty’s three pillars. Canada has already led by example by submitting annual reports to NPT meetings on our efforts to implement all articles of the NPT, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the 13 Practical Steps from 2000 and, most recently, the 2010 Action Plan. In our view, this type of reporting provides the highest level of transparency and can contribute greatly to confidence-building among States Parties.

To facilitate the filing of country reports on commitments under the 2010 Action Plan, Canada and our NPDI partners have submitted a working paper on Transparency, which sets out a common reporting template for all 64 action plan items that all NPT States Parties can use. This builds upon previous working papers submitted at the 2012 and 2014 PrepComs, as well as the 2015 RevCon. During this year’s PrepCom, Canada also co-hosted a side-event with Japan on the subject of transparency, which highlighted this new reporting template. We encourage all States Parties to submit country reports using this template by the 2020 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

A further means to strengthen the review cycle and the NPT regime is to examine more fully how to address questions relating to withdrawal from the Treaty. Article X recognizes the right of states to leave the NPT in extraordinary circumstances. However, that there are lessons to be learned from the DPRK’s attempt to withdraw from the Treaty should be clear to all. While the treaty provides the right of withdrawal, it does not provide clear and agreed guidelines for addressing the many practical and procedural issues that must be addressed should a State
decide to execute this right. At its core, this is about the pledge we all made to one another upon ratifying the Treaty to ensure mutual accountability.

Canada would again like to highlight working paper “47” (NPT/CONF.2015/WP.47) submitted at the 2015 RevCon about the exercise of the right of withdrawal. This paper outlines a number of principles governing the exercise of withdrawal. These principles are designed to address key issues, including: continued responsibility for non-compliance committed prior to withdrawal; the need for engagement to address concerns without recourse to the ultimate decision to withdraw; and, the importance of the rights of nuclear suppliers to ensure that materials provided remain under safeguard, are returned and/or destroyed.

I thank you, Mr.Chairman,